

Healthy habits

For toddlers and pre-schoolers ages 2-4

To be completed by the doctor

Name: _____		
Height: _____	Healthy levels A body mass index percentile between the 5 th and 85 th percentile	Your child's weight is: <input type="checkbox"/> Below a healthy weight <input type="checkbox"/> At a healthy weight <input type="checkbox"/> Above a healthy weight
Weight: _____		
Weight assessment results		
Body mass index (BMI): _____		
Percentile: _____		

Helping your child maintain a healthy weight involves the entire family and must start early.

Eating healthy and getting enough daily physical activity are habits that your child may hold on to throughout life. Here are some key ways to create a healthy future for your family.

Limit sweet drinks and offer water instead.

- Soft drinks and sugared drinks, including juice drinks, are high in calories. They have no nutritional value and are bad for children's teeth. Young children should not drink soft drinks.
- Water helps your child feel full. Encourage water between meals.

Limit screen time to less than 2 hours per day.

- Screen time includes watching television, playing video games or using the computer.
- Do not put a television in your child's bedroom.
- Screen time does not encourage physical activity and certain commercials may promote unhealthy foods and behaviors.

Increase playtime and physical activity.

- Children need at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time unless they are sleeping.
- Be active with your kids.
- Make it fun. This will teach your child to love being active.



Healthy habits

Serve five or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

- Serve lots of whole grains, fruits and vegetables at each meal.
- Fruits and vegetables are high in vitamins, minerals and fiber.
- Fruits and vegetables can help your child feel full.

Easy tips for healthy eating

- After the age of two, switch from whole milk to lowfat/nonfat milk – 2 to 3 cups (16 to 24 ounces) per day.
- Do not use food as a reward or punishment.
- Be a role model by eating healthy food.
- Have regular family meals at home, not in front of the television.
- Offer small portions of each food and allow your child to ask for more.
- Limit fast foods and eating out.

Ways to be active with your child

- Plan time to go to the playground.
- Visit your local community center for family activities.
- Play tag or follow the leader.
- Turn on the radio and dance.
- Ask your child to act like a frog, bunny, cat, dog, elephant or duck.
- Have your child jump, twist, skip, run or hop to music.
- Walk or bike ride around your neighborhood.
- Play catch.
- Fly a kite.

My family's action plan

Start by setting a specific goal for your family. Based on how ready you and your family are to change health habits, check one or two of the following goals. Give yourself and your child a nonfood reward, like a nice new book or toy, when you accomplish your goals. Small changes make a big difference toward reaching your family's health goals.

Check one or two of the following goals that you can do now:

- Imagine your family 3 to 5 years from now. Are your behaviors consistent with your hopes for the future?
- Read about or talk to others who have successfully made changes in their family's health habits. What can you do that others have done?
- Become more familiar with your family's current habits. Track how much physical activity everyone gets per week and work to increase it.
- Monitor what your child eats, how physically active he/she is and how much screen time he/she gets for two weeks.
- Take small steps, like walking 10 minutes with your child every day until you can be sure your family is getting 30 to 60 minutes a day.
- Start placing limits on your child's television viewing.
- Other goals: _____

Sources: Institute of Medicine. Preventing Childhood Obesity. 2004. <http://www.iom.edu/?id=25048>
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http://www.iowamedical.org/public_h/Obesity_White_Paper.pdf
Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005. <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/>
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